

PROLOGUE
AND
EPILOGUE
TO THE PLAY OF
THE WAY TO KEEP HIM,

PERFORMED AT
RICHMOND HOUSE,

On Thursday, the 17th of May, 1787,

B E F O R E

THEIR MAJESTIES,

A N D

Their Royal Highnesses the *Princess Royal*, the *Princess Augusta*, the
Princess Elizabeth, the *Princess Mary*, and the *Princess Sophia*.

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

Mr. Lovemore,	THE EARL OF DERBY.
Sir Brilliant Fashion,	THE HON. MR. EDGCUMBE.
Sir Bashfull Constant,	MAJOR ARABIN.
William, Servant to Mr. Lovemore,	SIR HENRY ENGLEFIELD.
Sideboard, Servant to Sir Bashfull Constant,	MR. CAMPBELL.

W O M E N.

Mrs. Lovemore,	THE HON. MRS. DAMER.
The Widow Bellmour,	THE HON. MRS. HOBART.
Lady Constant,	MISS CAMPBELL.
Muslin, Maid to Mrs. Lovemore,	MRS. BRUCE.
Mignonet, Maid to Mrs. Bellmour,	MRS. BLOUSE.

The Prologue Written by *The Right Honourable General Conway*,
and Spoken by *The Honourable Mrs. Hobart*.

The Epilogue Written by *The Right Honourable Lieut. Gen. Burgoyne*,
and Spoken by *The Honourable Mrs. Damer*.

PROLOGUE.

SINCE I was doom'd to tread the awful Stage,
Thank Heaven that placed me in this polish'd age!
There was a time, we're told, when in a cart
I might have play'd this lovely Widow's part;
Or travell'd like a Pedlar with a pack,
And my whole homely Wardrobe at my back;
But, truth; I feel no fancy for such mumming;
And sure one's dres should be at least becoming!
No Rainbow Silks then flaunted in the wind;
No Gauzes swell'd before; nor Cork behind;
No Diamonds then with all their sparkling train,
Nor Rouge, nor Powder, e'en a single grain.
~~But those~~ were simple times, the learn'd agree.—
Simple indeed! too simple much for me!

Another age produc'd a diff'rent scene;
All grand and stately, as the first was mean,
The change indeed was total, *à la lettre*;
Yet I can hardly say 'twas for the better.
For was't not strange to see a well-drest Player
Strut on high buskins in the open air;
Then bawl to Galleries high as any Steeple;
Or squeak thro' Pipes to forty thousand people?
Good Heavens how horrid! what a monst'rous notion!
'Twou'd quite deprive one of all speech and motion.
And then to wear one settled, strange grimace,
Or endless Simpers on a pasteboard face;
To hide the beauties bounteous Nature made,
Beneath a stifling Vizard's filthy shade;
To lose of Siddons' glance the proud controul,
Or swimming eye that paints the melting soul;
Th'obedient brow that can be stern, or meek;
The dimpling blush that dwells on Farren's cheek;
The well tun'd airs that suit each varying part;
And looks that talk the language of the heart!

These Ancients, we're assur'd were wond'rous wits;
In taste I'd rather trust our honest Cits:
They might be learn'd with all their musty rules;
For me, I set them down as errant fools;
And must conclude, midst all those boasted arts,
Their Audiences had neither eyes nor hearts.

To modern Stages too, in my conception,
One fairly might produce some just objection ;
'Tis such a concourse, such a staring show !
Mobs shout above, and Criticks snarl below.
But when their Battle, in its dire array,
Vents its full rage on Players or on Play,
You'd think yourself a hundred leagues from shore ;
The Boatswain whistles, and the Monsters roar.
True ; for Ambition 'tis an ample field ;
Vast crops of praise its fertile regions yield,
But rankling thorns infest the genial soil,
And keenest tempests blast the planter's toil.

While here, in this fair Garden's calm retreat,
At once the Virtues, and the Muse's seat ;
Where friendly Suns their kindest influence shed,
Each tender Plant may dauntless rear its head.

Here in the peaceful silence of the Grove,
Sacred to friendship and to friendly love ;
If an Unlicens'd, tho' not Venal Band,
Have dar'd with zealous, yet with trembling hand,
Ent'ring with pious awe their hallow'd shrine,
To raise an Altar to the Heav'nly Nine ;
If strongly ardent in so fair a cause,
We have transgress'd while we revere the Laws ;
E'en Cæsar's self their Guardian and their Friend,
Will thro' our error see its nobler end.
Patron of Arts, he'll own the generous flame ;
The friends of Taste and Freedom, are the same !
And shou'd the gracious Pow'rs which can restrain,
E'en by their presence consecrate our Scene ;
Kindly indulgent to the Muse they love,
Shou'd they protect attempts they might reprove ;
With condescension that each fear beguil's ;
You'll read our Licence in their fav'ring smiles.

E P I L O G U E.

"THE Way to Keep Him"—is the task so hard,
When Life's best Lot is the assur'd reward?

Does Man, unthinking Man, his share despise?

Or does weak Woman throw away the prize?

"Tis in ourselves our Empire to maintain:

I've trac'd the happy Image in my brain,

Smiling she fits and weaves her rosy chain.

Oh! cou'd my humble Skill, which often strove

In mimic Stone to copy forms I love;

By soft gradation reach a higher art,

And bring to view a sculpture of the heart!

I'll try; and cull Materials as they're scatter'd—

Not from one object, left 'twere said I flatter'd:

First, Temper—gentle, uniform, obedient—

Yes, mighty Sirs—we know your grand ingredient:

I have it in that Face (*writes*) th' example's down—

That seldom wears, and never meets a frown.

Vivacity and Wit (*looks round*) I'll take from you—

And Sentiment, from Lady I know who.

Truth and Discretion—there—how they adorn her!

And Delicacy—peeping from that corner.

For Sensibility, where smiles and sighs

In Pain or Joy with blended softness rise,

I see it breaking thro' yon lovely bloom,—

For a desire to please—I'll look at home.

Hypocrisy—don't start—she wants one grain,

One little atom, just to cover pain,

When not content with blessings in her power

Her Truant robs her Ay'rice of an hour.

Such are the gifts th' attentive Loves should bring,

A hoop of gems to guard the bridal ring.

Need I, *here*, point to Virtues more sublime!

Unchang'd by fashion, unimpair'd by time!

To higher duties of connubial ties!

To mutual blessings that from duties rise!

Your looks—your hearts—the bright assemblage own,

Which Heaven to emulative life has shown,

And plac'd, in double lustre, on a throne.